

Statement from EPA on Potential Pesticide Incident in the U.S. Virgin Islands

4/6/2015

The EPA continues to work closely with the U.S. Virgin Island government to investigate an incident reported to EPA on March 20, 2015 in which paramedics responded to a call that four people in a family staying at the Sirenusa Condominium Resort in Cruz Bay, St. John became very ill.

EPA took action and the agency has conducted sampling at the site. EPA staff remains on-site to assist the investigation.

The EPA is investigating to not only address what happened, but also to ensure this does not happen to anyone else. EPA will ensure that appropriate steps are taken if it is determined any environmental regulations or laws were violated. EPA is working cooperatively with the Virgins Islands government, The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry and Department of Justice.

The use of Meth-O-Gas, which is the product used in this incident, is restricted due to its acute toxicity. Only certified applicators are allowed to use it in certain agricultural settings and it is not authorized for use in indoor dwellings. Health effects of acute exposure to methyl bromide are serious and include central nervous system and respiratory system damage. Pesticides can be very toxic and it is critically important that they be used only as approved by EPA. For more information about EPA's pesticide program and its requirements, visit <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/>. For more information on methyl bromide, visit <http://www.epa.gov/region2/methyl-bromide.pdf>.